



## A NOTE FROM MIFMU'S NEW FMO

*Michael Davis, Fire Management Officer for the Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit, began with MIFMU in May. He shares his background and an introduction below:*

I came to Montrose from the Hoosier National Forest (NF), where I was the Forest Fire Management Officer (FMO) for six years. Before that, I had worked with a number of agencies in several locations. Working on the Hoosier NF allowed me to work near where I was raised in Kentucky.

After graduating from the University of Kentucky with a B.Sc. in Forestry, I started on the Clearwater NF (Idaho). After two seasons there, I worked for the Kentucky Division of Forestry for four years. Following four years in Kentucky, I completed a M.Sc. in Biology at the University of New Mexico. After graduate school, I stayed in New Mexico - spending four seasons with the Santa Fe NF. I then returned to Kentucky for three years working as a Forestry Technician on the Daniel Boone NF. I moved to Virginia to work as District Staff on the George Washington NF for six years - followed by five more years as the

Forest AFMO on George Washington/ Jefferson NF. I moved back to New Mexico to work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as the FMO. I stayed with the USFWS, but eventually moved back to Virginia as the Regional Prescribed Burn Specialist. That brought me to my last position on the Hoosier NF.

I have served on two national teams as Fire Behavior Analyst (FBAN) since 1998 - most recently with one of the SW teams for the past seven years.

I've been married to my wife, Rebecca, for 29 years. We have one son, Logan, who is 26. Rebecca runs the National Cooperative of Health Networks, and will be bringing that position to Montrose. Our son has recently moved from San Antonio, Texas, to Murfreesboro, Tennessee working in sports sales and marketing. We visited Colorado quite often when living in New Mexico, and are excited at the chance to live here. It's a beautiful place with great people. Come by and say hello if you're in the neighborhood.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

Fire information is often critical during the initial stages of a fire. The quality of fire information affects the public and media's impression of not only the fire organization, but the respective agencies as well.

Two Public Affairs Specialists and one Fire Education/Mitigation Specialist share the responsibilities of initial attack fire information for the Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit:

- **Shannon Borders**, BLM SW District  
Office: 970.240.5399 Cell: 970.462.1009
- **Lee Ann Loupe**, GMUG National Forest  
Office: 970.874.6717 Cell: 970.596.0246
- **Chris Barth**, MIFMU  
Office: 970.240.5317 Cell: 970.596.0430

The three Public Information Officers (PIOs) will rotate fire information duties. The on-call PIO will primarily cover initial attack fires and larger fires until a Public Information Officer is assigned to the fire, if necessary. This approach allows for:

- consistent source of information for media;

- fire information workload to be distributed among the three PIOs; and
- relief of media pressure on MIFMU Dispatch.

INITIAL ATTACK PIO ROTATION							Information Line: 970.240.1070
~ June 2011 ~							
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
			1 Chris Barth 970.596.0430 (c)	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14 Lee Ann Loupe 970.596.0246 (c)	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22 Shannon Borders 970.462.1009(c)	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	Notes:		

### Media Information Line/ On-Call PIO

The MIFMU Fire Information line phone number is 970.240.1070. The on duty PIO will be responsible for updating and maintaining this media phone line, as well as for answering media calls. **Fire information requests should be forwarded to either the MIFMU Fire Information phone line or the on-call PIO.**

# WEST REGION WILDFIRE COUNCIL

The West Region Wildfire Council (WRWC) has been meeting monthly since last fall - working with the county representatives in support of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) development and to hire a CWPP Coordinator (*see story below*).

Once the CWPPs are complete, the CWPP Coordinator will work with private land owners and the local, county, state and federal agencies to begin implementing the recommendations for fuels mitigation identified in the plans. To assist WRWC with encouraging private landowners to

complete fuels reduction and defensible space projects, they will be using Community Assistance (CA) funds - offered as "mini-grants" to complete the work at a 90/10 match.

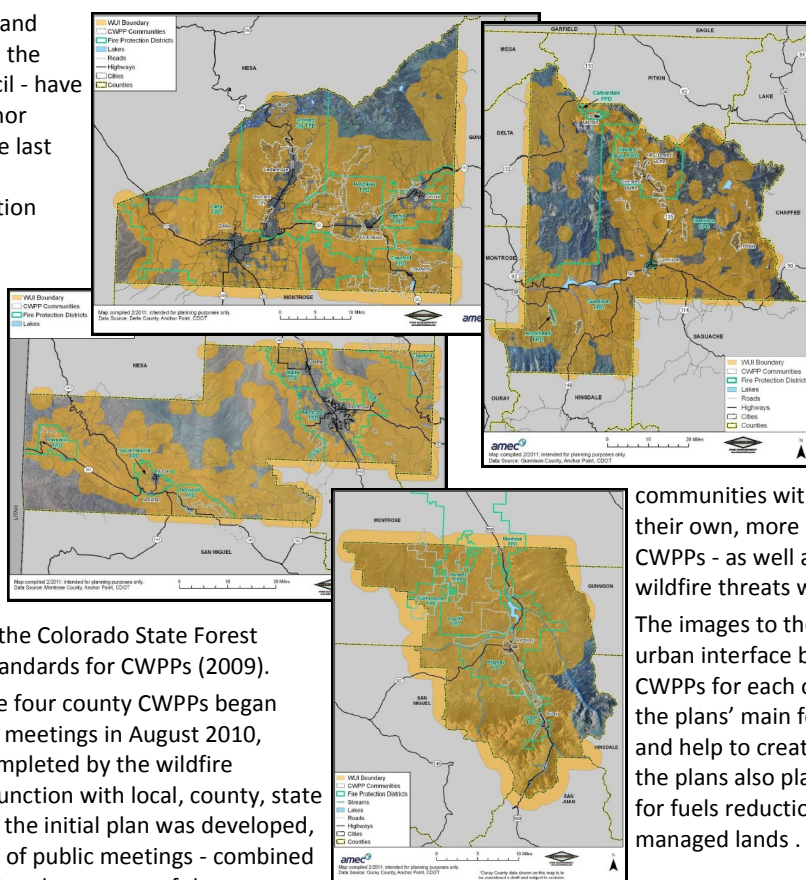
The next WRWC meeting will take place on Thursday, June 16th at 1000hrs.

## COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANS

Delta, Gunnison, Montrose and Ouray Counties - along with the West Region Wildfire Council - have been working with the Anchor Point Group and AMEC since last fall to develop county-wide Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) for the aforementioned counties. Each of the plans are designed to define the wildland urban interface (WUI) for each county, identify wildfire risk, and develop a series of recommendations for both the fire districts and communities - while meeting the intent of the Healthy Forests

Restoration Act (2003) and the Colorado State Forest Service revised minimum standards for CWPPs (2009).

The planning process for the four county CWPPs began with a series of stakeholder meetings in August 2010, followed with field work completed by the wildfire consultants working in conjunction with local, county, state and federal agencies. Once the initial plan was developed, each county hosted a series of public meetings - combined with a public survey - to refine the content of the



documents.

Based on the feedback received from the public and stakeholder groups, the CWPPs have undergone three revisions - the most recent was completed on June 3rd. The final plans should be ready for the counties approval before the end of the month.

The completed plans provide both a framework and background for

communities within the counties to complete their own, more specific, community-based CWPPs - as well as a work plan to address the wildfire threats within the county.

The images to the left show the wildland urban interface boundaries identified in the CWPPs for each of the four counties. While the plans' main focus is to reduce wildfire risk and help to create fire adapted communities, the plans also play a role in identifying areas for fuels reduction projects on federally-managed lands .

## WRWC CWPP COORDINATOR

As the West Region Wildfire Council was planning to embark on completing county-wide Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) for each of the six counties in the region, the members of the Council were steadfast in making sure that the effort would not result in unused plans. To that end, the Council decided to pursue the possibility of hiring a CWPP Coordinator to assist with the development and implementation of these plans.

The WRWC's CWPP Coordinator, Lilia Colter,

began in January 2011 - in the midst of development of four county-wide CWPPs. Technically, Lilia is a contract employee of the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) - working for the West Region Wildfire Council.

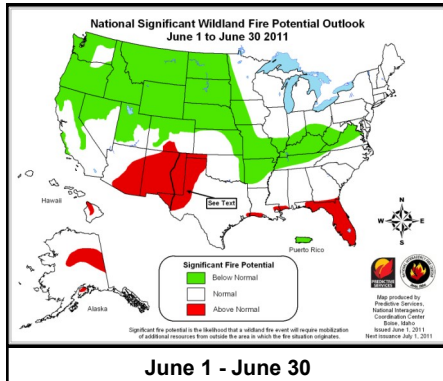
Lilia is a recent graduate from the University of Colorado, Boulder where she received a B.A. in Geography with an emphasis in Natural Hazards. Her interest in wildfire was sparked after working in logistics at the Boulder Emergency Operations Center

during the Four Mile Fire.

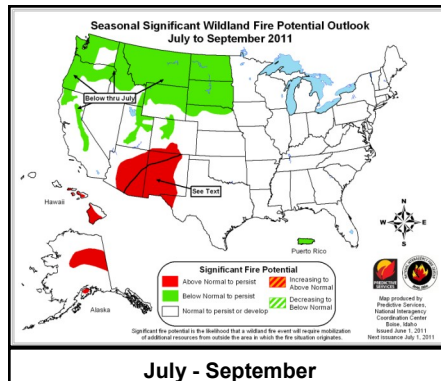
Before moving to Montrose to work with WRWC, Lilia worked in emergency management for the City of Westminster where she helped to write the City's Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan and Emergency Coordination Center Operations Plan. Lilia also assisted San Miguel County in updating their All Hazard Mitigation Plan. Recently, Lilia received the Rookie Emergency Manager of the Year award at the 2011 Colorado Emergency Management Conference.

# WILDLAND FIRE OUTLOOK

The June through September 2011 significant fire potential outlooks are shown below:



June 1 - June 30



July - September

The primary factors influencing these outlooks are:

**La Niña:** La Niña continues to weaken with neutral conditions expected by July. However, soil moisture extremes resulting from La Niña will continue to affect temperature and precipitation patterns through the season. Temperatures will generally be below average with above average precipitation in areas where soil moisture is significantly above normal.

**Drought:** Drought will continue across much of the southern third of the U.S. with some improvement expected along the Gulf Coast and in parts of Texas and the Southwest.

**Fuel Dryness:** Fuel conditions across the southern tier of states are expected to continue to be dry through June, gradually improving across west Texas, the Gulf Coast and Florida as the month progresses. Across the northern tier heavy snow and precipitation this spring has delayed green up and curing, generally delaying the onset of fire season.

## In the Rocky Mountain Area:

Above normal significant fire potential is forecast during June below 8000 feet in the southern Front Range, with significant fire potential increasing to above normal late in the month across southwest Colorado below 8000 feet. This is due to severe long term drought conditions, precipitation deficits, marginal green up, and frequent windy and dry periods. Although drought conditions are not as extensive over southwest Colorado, forecasted warm, and dry conditions, and frequent wind events are predicted to increase significant fire potential to above normal late in the month. Carry over fuels from last year's growing season are still dominant creating additional fuel loading. Additionally, these

areas of southern Colorado typically experience increasing ignitions in June. Below normal significant fire potential is expected to extend from the higher elevations of western Colorado into northern portions of the state, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, and eastern Kansas due to a very wet spring and well above average snowpack in the mountains.

Significant fire potential is forecast to continue at above normal through mid July in the southern Front Range and across the southwest portion of Colorado, generally below 8000 feet. Overall, these trends are forecast to continue until moisture associated with the Southwest Monsoon pushes northward into southern Colorado, decreasing the potential to near normal by mid July. Below normal significant fire potential is forecast to continue across central to northern Wyoming into South Dakota, northern Nebraska, and the central to northern mountains of Colorado. However, average fire season conditions are expected by August, with some concerns of drier and warmer than average conditions developing.

# NWS FIRE WEATHER ZONES

Effective Tuesday, June 7, 2011, the NWS Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in Grand Junction, CO, split the Montrose Forecast Area (COZ205) into four new fire weather forecast zones. This change will improve fire weather forecast services for users by better associating zone areas with weather regimes and terrain.

The split of COZ205 (Montrose Forecast Area) will create new fire weather forecast zones for the mountainous terrain of the northwest San Juan mountains and Uncompahgre Plateau (COZ291, Northern San Juan), the lower valleys of Delta and eastern Montrose counties (COZ292, North Fork), the Paradox Valley area of western Montrose and San Miguel counties (COZ290, Paradox Valley) and the mountainous terrain of the West Elk Mountains (COZ293, Gunnison Basin).

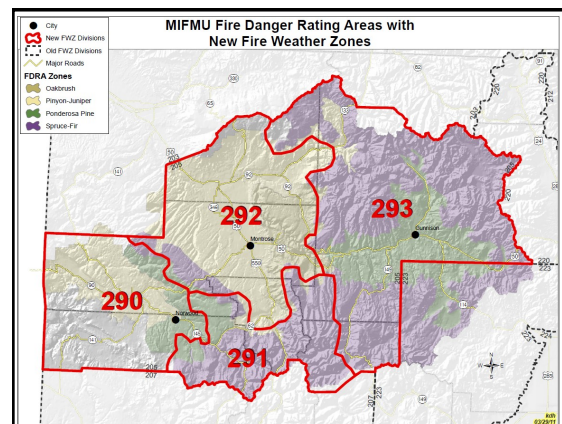
## New Zone Descriptors

**New Zone COZ290 - Paradox Valley:** This zone consists of the Paradox Valley area of western Montrose and San Miguel Counties.

**New Zone COZ291 - Northern San Juan:** This zone is defined as the northern portion of the San Juan Mountains within Ouray and eastern San Miguel Counties, and the Uncompahgre Plateau within northwest Ouray and western Montrose Counties.

**New Zone COZ292 - North Fork:** This zone is defined as Uncompahgre and North Fork of the Gunnison River basins in Delta, eastern Montrose, and extreme western Gunnison Counties, in western Colorado.

**New Zone COZ293 - Gunnison Basin:** This zone is defined as the Gunnison Basin within Delta and Gunnison Counties in western Colorado.







## 2011 PIO FIRE SEASON THEMES

### 1. Safety of the public and firefighters is the top consideration in fire and aviation management.

- Public and firefighter safety is our highest priority.
- Firefighters always make safety their top concern.
- No structure, or natural or cultural resource, is worth taking an unneeded risk.
- Structures can be rebuilt and natural resources generally come back in time. A life cannot be replaced.



### 2. Fires are managed in different ways.

- More than one strategy can be used during a wildfire. The strategies may range from quickly putting out the wildfire to monitoring a wildfire benefiting the land.
- When a wildfire threatens people, homes, or important natural or cultural resources, it will be put out as quickly and efficiently as possible, without compromising safety.
- Ecosystems in the United States evolved with wildfire. Wildfire is essential to most ecosystems' health and resilience.

### 3. Firefighters count on you to do your part.

- Thousands of communities are located in fire-

prone areas. Residents must take action to adapt their communities to fire. These actions will protect their homes and improve the safety of the public and firefighters.

- Wildland firefighters are not responsible for clearing brush, trees and other flammable material away from your house. That's the responsibility of property owners.

### 4. Fire seasons are expected to become longer and more difficult.

- The last three fire seasons have been lighter than usual, but firefighters know that the trend will change. Wildfires occur throughout the year in various parts of the country.
- Climate change is a factor in the changing fire season. Although the United States had a generally cool year in 2010, other parts of the world experienced record temperatures and dryness. Other factors leading to more difficult seasons include an overabundance of flammable plants and trees and construction in fire-prone areas.

### 5. Teamwork is essential in wildland fire.

- Wildland fire knows no boundaries. Local, state, tribal and federal firefighters all work together to manage wildfires.
- Pooling our strengths and resources helps us to be more effective and keeps our costs down.



MIFMU MONTHLY



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Look for new updates to come to the MIFMU website in 2010

[http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch\\_centers/r2mtc/](http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2mtc/)

### June Events

- RT-130, Refresher Training, Montrose, June 1
- Pack Test, Montrose, June 2
- MIFMU Readiness Review, June 4-6
- Colorado Wildland Fire & Incident Management Academy, Frisco, June 6 - 12
- *First Fire Lookout Staffed, Squaw Mountain, Maine, June 9, 1905*
- MIFMU Fuels Call, June 14
- West Region Wildfire Council Meeting, Montrose, June 16
- *Hayman Fire, Pike National Forest, Colorado, June 21, 2002 - 5 firefighter fatalities*
- *Dude Fire, Tonto National Forest, Arizona, June 26, 1990 - 6 firefighter fatalities*
- MIFMU Fuels Call, June 28